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General Assembly

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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2011
6-12 September 2011

Agenda and programme of work for 2011

The agenda for the substantive session of 2011 of the Committee on Conferences was approved by the Committee at its organizational session, on 20 April 2011, on the basis of a draft agenda proposed by the Secretariat in the annex to document A/AC.172/2011/L.1. The approved agenda for the substantive session of 2011 is accordingly issued in the present document. In accordance with section F of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, all matters pertaining to conference management and regularly reported under the agenda item "Pattern of conferences" will be included in one comprehensive report. The draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2012-2013 will be issued as a separate document.

At its organizational session, the Committee on Conferences also adopted the dates for its substantive session, to be held from Tuesday, 6 September, to Monday, 12 September 2011. The Committee will meet formally on 6, 7 and 12 September, as required, leaving 8 and 9 September for informal consultations and for the processing of the draft report. A videoconference is scheduled to be held on the morning of 7 September with the participation of conference management officials in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the theme of which will be announced at a later date.

Agenda for the substantive session of 2011

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Calendar of conferences and meetings:
   (a) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243;
   (b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2012 and 2013;
   (c) Intersessional departures for 2011 and related matters.

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3. Meetings management:

   (a) Utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities:

      (i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs and consultations with bodies concerning utilization of conference-servicing resources;

      (ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet "as required";

      (iii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States;

      (iv) Utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi;

      (v) Utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa;

   (b) Impact of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach), on meetings held at Headquarters during its implementation.

4. Integrated global management.

5. Documentation and publication-related matters.

6. Translation and interpretation-related matters.

7. Organization of work.

8. Adoption of the report.

Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

2. Calendar of conferences and meetings

(a) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243

In paragraph 15 of its resolution 47/202 A, the General Assembly demanded that all subsidiary organs of the Assembly comply with the provisions of section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 40/243, in which it had decided that no subsidiary organ of the Assembly would meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

In accordance with the procedure established by the Committee at its 1986 session and reaffirmed at its 1992 session, Chairs of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly that wish to meet at Headquarters during the main part of the Assembly should submit their requests to the Chair of the Committee for its consideration and recommendation to the General Assembly.

Documentation: Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences to the President of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly (A/66/__).

(b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2012 and 2013

The Secretariat will prepare a draft calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2012-2013 for consideration by the Committee on Conferences at its substantive session of 2011.

The Committee will submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2012 and 2013 for approval.

Documentation: Draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2012 and 2013 (A/AC.172/2011/L.__)

(c) Intersessional departures for 2011 and related matters

The Secretariat will compile a list of requests for intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 2011, together with information about any action taken by the Committee, for inclusion in the report of the Committee.

3. Meetings management

(a) Utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

(i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs and consultations with bodies concerning utilization of conference-servicing resources

In section II.A, paragraph 2, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly noted that the overall utilization factor at the four main duty stations in 2009 was 86 per cent, as compared with 85 per cent in 2008 and 83 per cent in 2007, which was above the established benchmark of 80 per cent.

In paragraph 3 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly welcomed the steps taken by those bodies that had adjusted their programmes of work in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources, and requested the Committee on Conferences to continue consultations with the secretariats and bureaux of bodies that underutilized their conference-servicing resources.

Statistical data and analysis of the planned and actual utilization of conference-servicing resources allocated to a core sample of bodies at all four duty stations will be made available to the Committee. The Chair will report orally on consultations with bodies in New York that have underutilized their conference-servicing resources.

(ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet "as required"

In section II.A, paragraph 5, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly noted that the percentage of meetings held by the bodies entitled to meet "as required" that were provided with interpretation services in New York in 2009 was 95 per cent, as compared with 90 per cent in 2008, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report on the provision of conference services to those bodies through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter for meetings held in New York and Geneva.

(iii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

In section II.A, paragraph 7, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly recognized the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies, and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that, as far as possible, all requests for conference services for the meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States were met and to inform the requesters as early as possible about the availability of conference services, including interpretation, as well as about any changes that might occur before the meeting. In paragraph 8 of the same section, the Assembly noted that the percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States that were provided with interpretation services at the four main duty stations was 79 per cent in 2009, as compared with 77 per cent in 2008, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to employ innovative means to address the difficulties experienced by Member States owing to the lack of conference services for some meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States and to report thereon to the Assembly through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter for meetings held at all four duty stations.

(iv) Utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

In section II.A, paragraph 10, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with several resolutions of the Assembly, including resolution 64/230, section II.A, paragraph 9, in conformity with the headquarters rule, all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies were held in Nairobi in 2009, and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

(v) Utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa

In section II.A, paragraph 11, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly noted that ongoing promotional efforts and initiatives undertaken by the management of the conference centre of the Economic Commission for Africa had led to a sustained trend in utilization of the premises in 2009, and, in paragraph 12, it requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore means to increase the utilization of the conference centre of the Economic Commission for Africa and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

(b) Impact of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach), on meetings held at Headquarters during its implementation

In section II.B of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to ensure that the implementation of the capital master plan, including the temporary relocation of conference-servicing staff to a swing space, would not compromise the quality of conference services provided to Member States in the six official languages; to report regularly to the Committee on matters pertaining to the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations during

the construction period; to continue to provide adequate information technology support for conference services, within the existing resources of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, in order to ensure their seamless operation throughout the implementation of the capital master plan; to continue to provide adequate support, within the existing resources of the Department, to ensure continued maintenance of the information technology facilities of the Department, implementation of the global information technology initiative and delivery of quality conference services; and to consult Member States on initiatives that affected the utilization of conference services and conference facilities.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

4. Integrated global management

In section III, paragraph 2, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the efforts of the Secretary-General, using in-house capacity, to improve the utilization of conference services, in particular through the implementation of the project on, inter alia, the Electronic Meetings Planning and Resource Allocation System (e-Meets) and the interpreters' assignment programme (e-APG module) ("project 2"),[1] and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on other efforts to that end.

In paragraph 3 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure the full implementation of the project on global documentation management ("project 3"),[1] and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

In paragraph 14 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly noted with concern that the Secretary-General had not included in his report on the pattern of conferences[2] information about the financial savings achieved through implementation of the integrated global management projects as requested in section III, paragraph 4, of its resolution 63/248, and in section III, paragraph 12, of its resolution 64/230, and reiterated its request that the Secretary-General redouble his efforts to include this information in his next report on the pattern of conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

In section III, paragraph 9, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly reiterated that the satisfaction of Member States was a key performance indicator in conference management and conference services. In paragraph 10 of the same section, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that measures taken by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, as a key performance indicator of the Department, provided equal opportunities to Member States to present their evaluations in the six official languages of the United Nations and were in full compliance with relevant resolutions of the Assembly, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly, through the Committee on Conferences, on progress made in that regard.

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[1] See A/63/119 and Corr.1, sect. II.B.

[2] See A/65/122.

In paragraph 11 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore best practices and techniques in client satisfaction evaluations and to report on a regular basis to the Assembly on the results achieved.

In paragraph 12 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly welcomed the efforts made by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore innovative ways to systematically capture and analyse feedback from Member States and committee Chairs and Secretaries on the quality of conference services and to report thereon to the Assembly through the Committee on Conferences.

In paragraph 13 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to keep it apprised of progress made in integrated global management.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

In section III, paragraph 15, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to assess the efficiency and accountability mechanisms of conference management across the four main duty stations and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

In paragraph 67 of its resolution 64/243, the General Assembly stressed the need for programme managers, and duty stations resourced through section 2 of the programme budget, to be cost-effective and efficient in the use of services from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, in particular with respect to the effective functioning of the global management of conference services, and requested the Secretary-General to develop mechanisms that would enhance accountability in that regard.

In paragraph 68 of the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of printing and publishing and translation services, including, inter alia, full costing of in- and out-of-house printing, publishing and translation and an analysis of the Department costing methodologies, with due consideration to quality and confidentiality, and without prejudice to the quality of all language services and with respect for the specificities of the six official languages, and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session to be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

In line with recommendation 3 made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report on the evaluation of the integrated global management initiative of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management,[3] a comprehensive update of the costing methodology for conference services is being prepared in close consultation with the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

[3] See A/64/166.

5. Documentation and publication-related matters

In section IV, paragraph 14, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly decided to review, at its sixty-sixth session, the work of the task force chaired by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and to consider, where necessary, additional measures to ensure compliance with submission deadlines by author departments if the goal of 90 per cent compliance was not met.

In section IV, paragraph 15, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly urged author departments to fully adhere to deadlines in meeting the goal of 90 per cent submission compliance, and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that documents submitted late did not adversely affect the issuance of documents submitted on time and in compliance with set guidelines.

In paragraph 16 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide, in his next report on the pattern of conferences, further information on the waiver process for documents submitted over the word limits and/or not in compliance with the guidelines established by the Assembly for the reports of the Secretariat, intergovernmental bodies and subsidiary organs, including the criteria for issuing waivers and their application during the previous three years.

The Secretariat will report on this matter.

In section V, paragraph 17, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly noted that the consolidated lists of individuals and entities subject to sanctions, according to the sanctions committees of the Security Council, had not been translated into all six official languages, and recommended that the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions of the Security Council look into the practices related to the issuance of these consolidated lists, including their translation.

The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions of the Security Council will report on the matter.

6. Translation and interpretation-related matters

In section V, paragraph 2, of its resolution 65/245, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, including through the language-specific informational meetings held twice a year, and to ensure that such measures provided equal opportunities to Member States to present their evaluations in the six official languages of the United Nations and were in full compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Assembly.

In paragraph 5 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the measures taken by the Secretariat to fill current vacancies in the language services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, reiterated its request that the Secretary-General consider further measures aimed at decreasing the vacancy rates in Nairobi, and requested that the Secretary-General report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

In paragraph 6 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to hold competitive examinations for the recruitment of language staff sufficiently in advance in order to fill current and

future vacancies in the language services in a timely manner and to inform the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session of efforts in this regard.

In paragraph 8 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to increase the proportion of translation done contractually, with a view to achieving, inter alia, further efficiencies where this mode of delivery yielded a final product that was of comparable quality to in-house translation, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

In paragraph 11 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-sixth session on the experience, lessons learned and best practices of the main duty stations in performing quality control of contractual translations, including on requirements relating to the number and appropriate level of the staff needed to carry out this function.

In paragraph 12 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to establish globally standardized performance indicators and costing models aimed at a more cost-effective strategy for the in-house processing of documents and requested him to submit information in that regard to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

In paragraph 13 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the measures taken by the Secretary-General, in accordance with its resolutions, to address, inter alia, the issue of the replacement of retiring staff in the language services, and requested him to maintain and intensify those efforts, including the strengthening of cooperation with institutions that train language specialists in order to meet the needs in the six official languages of the United Nations.

In paragraph 14 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly noted in that regard that memorandums of understanding had not been signed with such language institutions in all geographical regions, in particular in Africa and Latin America, and requested the Secretary-General to increase his efforts to promote outreach programmes, including through internships, to language institutions in all regions and to introduce innovative methods to increase awareness of the programmes.

In paragraph 15 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, in cooperation with the Office of Human Resources Management, to increase its efforts to raise awareness among all Member States about opportunities for employment and internships in language services in the four main duty stations.

In paragraph 16 of the same section of the resolution, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the positive experience with traineeships at the United Nations Office at Vienna in training young professionals in and attracting them to the translation and interpretation services of the United Nations, and requested the Secretary-General to further develop the initiative and consider extending it to all duty stations and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

7. Organization of work

In section II.A, paragraph 20, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly encouraged the Committee on Conferences to keep under continued review the procedures for the participation of observers in the work of the Committee.

8. Adoption of the report